

6 Past Simple (I waited) or Past Continuous (I was waiting)

Compare the Past Simple and the Past Continuous:

Past Simple

Past Continuous

<p>1</p> <p>I/you/he/she/it/we/they { talked. didn't talk.</p> <p>Did I/you/he/she/it/we/they talk?</p>	<p>I/he/she/it was/wasn't You/we/they were/weren't } talking.</p> <p>Was I/he/she/it } talking? Were you/we/they }</p>
<p>2</p> <p>We use the Past Simple to talk about a complete event in the past:</p> <p><i>Last Saturday morning, Paul played football in the park.</i></p> <p>past Paul played football. now</p> <p>Here are some more examples: <i>On Sunday I made a cake.</i> <i>It rained a lot on Saturday morning.</i></p>	<p>We use the Past Continuous to talk about an action that was in progress, when something else happened:</p> <p><i>Last Saturday, Paul was playing football in the park when he saw Jane.</i></p> <p>past Paul was playing football. now</p> <p style="text-align: center;">He saw Jane.</p> <p>Here are some more examples: <i>The phone rang while I was making a cake.</i> <i>It was raining when we left home.</i></p>
<p>3</p> <p>We often use the Past Simple to talk about one event that followed another event:</p> <p><i>When Ann James left university, she went to work for a bank. She left the bank after five years, and wrote a book which ...</i></p>	<p>In a story we often use the Past Continuous to say what was in progress, when something happened:</p> <p><i>The sun was shining. People were sitting under the trees or walking around the park. Suddenly a car drove into the park ...</i></p>

Practice

A Use the Past Simple and the Past Continuous to make sentences from the words in brackets.

0 (The police/arrive/while/I/have/breakfast)
 The police arrived while I was having breakfast.

1 (The storm/start/while/they/drive/home)

2 (I/see/an accident/while /I/wait/for the bus)

3 (Mary/go/to several concerts/while/she/stay/in London)

0 (I/have/breakfast/when/the police/arrive)
 I was having breakfast when the police arrived.

4 (My father/cook/the dinner /when /he/burn/his fingers)

5 (The soldiers/prepare/to leave/when/the bomb/explode)

B Complete these texts using the Past Simple or the Past Continuous of the verbs in brackets.

- 0 Beethoven wrote (write) nine symphonies; he was writing (write) another symphony when he died.
- 1 Last Saturday Tom wanted to make two salads. He _____ (make) the first one in five minutes. He _____ (make) the second one when his guests _____ (arrive), and they _____ (help) him to finish it.
- 2 The artist Gaudi _____ (design) several houses in Barcelona, Spain. Later he _____ (start) work on a church. He _____ (work) on the church when he _____ (die).
- 3 Last month a bank robber _____ (escape) while the police _____ (take) him to prison. Later they _____ (catch) him again, and this time they _____ (lock) him up without any problem.
- 4 Philip's football team were lucky last Saturday. After 20 minutes they _____ (lose), but in the end they _____ (win) the game by 4 goals to 2.
- 5 John Lennon _____ (sing) and _____ (play) on many records with the Beatles. After that he _____ (record) several songs without the Beatles. He _____ (prepare) a new record when Mark Chapman _____ (shoot) him.
- 6 The evening was getting darker; the street lights _____ (come) on. People _____ (hurry) home after work. I _____ (stand) in a queue at the bus stop. Suddenly somebody _____ (grab) my bag.

C A policewoman is interviewing Mary Croft about last Friday evening. Look at the pictures and complete the conversation. Use the Past Simple or the Past Continuous of the words in brackets.



- Policewoman: What time ⁰ did you get (you/get) home from work?
- Mary: At about 6 o'clock.
- Policewoman: And what ¹ _____ (you /do) after you got home?
- Mary: I read the newspaper.
- Policewoman: Did anything happen while ² _____ (read) the paper?
- Mary: Yes, the phone ³ _____ (ring) .
- Policewoman: What ⁴ _____ (you/do) when your husband came home?
- Mary: I was watching TV, and I ⁵ _____ (drink) a cup of coffee.
- Policewoman: Did you and your husband stay at home?
- Mary: No, I ⁶ _____ (drink) my coffee. Then I put on my raincoat, and we ⁷ _____ (go) out at seven o'clock.
- Policewoman: Why ⁸ _____ (you/put) your raincoat on?
- Mary: Because it ⁹ _____ (rain), of course.